

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7010

June 30, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush,

Last week the Senate strongly reaffirmed its support for the deployment of effective missile defenses for our nation. During floor consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2007, the Senate voted 98-0 to increase spending on missile defense activities by \$45 million above the amount recommended by the Armed Services Committee, which in turn was \$100 million above the amount requested by the Administration for such activities. Coming after years of opposition to missile defense spending by many Democrats in Congress, last week's action represented a remarkable turnaround.

The Defense Authorization bill also authorized procurement of components necessary to build 10 additional missile defense interceptors. These interceptors will augment the 40 previously authorized for deployment at our two existing missile defense interceptor facilities at Fort Greely, Alaska and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. I urge you to deploy these interceptors at a third site where they would increase the defensive coverage of our nation, of our deployed forces overseas, and of our allies. Further, because it is clear that the contribution of these 10 additional interceptors to our national security will be maximized if that third site is located in Europe, I urge you to deploy these interceptors at a site on the territory of one of our NATO allies.

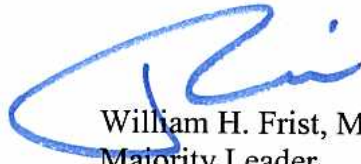
All studies have indicated that a third missile defense interceptor site in Europe will significantly enhance the protection afforded to the United States against ballistic missiles launched from Iran. As Iran continues to make progress in deploying its Shahab 3 missiles and developing new, longer range missiles, while simultaneously pursuing nuclear weapons, the ability to shoot down Iranian warheads in flight becomes increasingly critical to our national security. While interceptors based at our existing missile defense sites in Alaska and California have some capability against the Iranian missile threat, it is indisputable that these two sites are oriented primarily against the threat from North Korea. A third site closer to Iran will enable us to shoot down Iranian missiles earlier in their flight trajectory and to attempt multiple intercepts should the first intercept attempt fail.

A second reason to establish a third site in Europe is that it will fulfill the vision first articulated by you during the 2000 campaign, and reiterated by you in NSPD-23 of December 16, 2002, to "develop and deploy missile defenses capable of protecting not only the United States and our deployed forces, but also our friends and allies." The geographical coverage of a missile defense site in Europe against the Iranian threat will encompass not only North America, but also much of Europe. This will enable us to shoot down missiles aimed at our tens of thousands of U.S. military personnel stationed in Europe, as well as missiles targeting our NATO allies. As you have explained in the past, ensuring that our NATO allies are also protected against missile threats will ensure that disparities in protection do not weaken the cohesion of the NATO alliance.

The threat from Iran is only going to grow in the years ahead. We need to take steps now to prepare to deal with that threat. Now that the Senate has voted to fund additional interceptors, the time has come to revive and reinvigorate discussions with allies in Europe that have previously expressed interest in hosting these interceptors at a third site on their territory.

I look forward to working with you to advance this important national priority.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frist", is written over the printed name.

William H. Frist, M.D.
Majority Leader
United States Senate